



HEARD ACROSS MONTANA

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IM Technical Committee Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

The Interoperability Montana Technical Committee (IMTC) met in Helena on Mon., Feb. 25. IMTC Chair Bob McWilliams reported on administrative committee decision making. Sub-committee chairs gave reports. For Network Design, Roger Smith, Montana Highway Patrol, indicated that the ProVision network monitoring software is being installed and that training will take place on March 9 and 10. He continues work on path surveys and site selection for the eastern tier. NEPAs for the southwest leg are pending, and the final Statements of Work for that project are complete. Dorothy Gremaux, Central Montana Dispatch Center, as the new chair of the Dispatch Connectivity Sub-Committee reported that she has asked colleagues to compile a list of equipment needs at a variety of different dispatch centers around the state as a starting point for the sub-committee. She also reported on research she conducted regarding CJIN background check requirements.

The Technical Committee discussed master controller responsibilities of local jurisdictions and agreed that a list of recommended spare parts should be compiled and rotated. Roger Smith will be responsible for inventory control in his new responsibilities as the Radio System Administrator. Sherry Evans, Northrop Grumman, is working on the Statement of Work for the second master control site. Members provided input on the building and facilities.

Dan Sullivan, PSSB, is researching state requirements for NEPAs on the site.

Kevin Bruski, IM Executive Director, reported on a request that has been sent out to determine the number of trunking-capable radios that need to be flash upgraded for trunking. The IMTC recommends that as funding becomes available, jurisdictions will be given priority for upgrading radios where trunking is coming on line soonest as well as to those jurisdictions that have invested resources to obtain radios from non-IM sources of funding. Kit Eldridge, Tyco Electronics, made the point that as the P25 technology becomes more mature, vendors are producing less expensive radios that may be compatible with the IM System. It may make more sense to purchase a new radio versus upgrading a radio that is already 4 to 5 years old.

Bob McWilliams, IMTC Chair, explained the controllers on the HVAC Units that come with the Thermobond buildings and explained techniques for adapting or changing the controller to reduce energy consumption.

Mark Adams, Northrop Grumman, distributed a list illustrating which ports on the master controller are filled and discussed future growth. He also reviewed the IM-12 Motorola Contract, and indicated that many of those trunking sites are not scheduled to come on line for a while. Members discussed priorities at various trunked sites around the state. Mark Canton, Motorola, gave a presentation on the inter-zone interface between the two master controllers that will be seamless to the user. It is a full function Smartzone® controller that requires four T-1s. He also quoted price differences between the 7.4 and the 7.6 software version as well as a list of features of the two. Constance Taylor, Northrop Grumman, presented on an U.S. Air Force proposal for an RVA (Remote Visual Access) system. Certain IM facilities are needed to assist with providing connectivity.

The Eastern Tier Consortium as well as Flathead and Sweet Grass Counties are submitting Assistance to Fire Fighters grant requests. All equipment requested will meet IM standards.

The next IMTC meeting will be Monday, March 23 at the MACo offices in Helena starting at 9:00 am.

Big Sky 11 Consortium Meeting

By E. Wing Spooner espooner@mt.gov

Project Director Ed Auker reiterated his announcement that he will remain on the Big Sky 11 Consortium as a Big Horn County representative, but is stepping down as the Project Director. He explained the duties of being a member of the Interoperability Montana (IM) Board of Project Directors and emphasized the importance of being involved with other



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IM standing and sub-committees. Elections were not held because members decided to re-vamp the consortium's bylaws and expand its membership to possibly include state and/or city representatives. Golden Valley Sheriff Floyd Fisher, the Big Sky 11 Consortium Vice Chair, will serve as Ed's proxy at upcoming IMPD meetings until the bylaws are completed and elections held. Ed appointed a group to work on the bylaws.

Ed also brought the group up to date on the status of the Sustainability Plan and explained that public hearings would be held to obtain more input. He also informed members of recent correspondence about a DPHHS grant program to help hospitals acquire radios compatible with the IM Project. Sherry Evans, Northrop Grumman, presented information about the Mobile Data Needs Assessment.

Dale Osborne, Montana Highway Patrol, gave a report on the Big Sky 11 Technical Committee meeting that took place that morning. He also introduced the consortium's new representative to the IM Technical Committee, Mike Linder with the Yellowstone County Sheriff's Office. Dale oriented the group to the technical build out and gave details about consortium sites that are either in the process of being built or are planned. Dale also described the purpose and design of the second master controller and explained the criteria used in the selection of the Belle Prairie (formerly the new Autovon) site near Glendive for its location.

The next Big Sky 11 Consortium meeting will be Thurs., March 26 at the Fire Station in Billings.

Western Consortium Meeting

By Dan Sullivan dsullivan@mt.gov

The Western Interoperable Communications Consortium (WICC) held its monthly meeting Tues., Feb. 24. Project Director George Gupton reported on the Sustainability Plan, saying it has been tabled until later in the summer in order to provide consortia members more opportunity to comment on and further develop the plan. George encouraged all members to submit written ideas. Kevin Bruski announced that Roger Smith is the new radio systems administrator for Interoperability Montana and will start March 2.

George gave the IM Project Directors report and indicated that the IM will have a booth at the HAZMAT Conference at Polson in March. He also said that \$2 million is in House Bill 10 as the legislature approaches the transmittal date.

Dave McGinnis, Missoula Sheriff's Dept., reported on the consortium's technical committee, indicating a

need for 13 trunking sites; however, funds are only available for 9 sites. The Miller's Peak site is on the list for trunking. Trunking equipment has been cold installed at the Pat's Knob site. The Jette site is complete as well and the microwave is up and running. The group discussed the need to purchase trunked-capable radios, but funding issues are a concern as well as the dominance of a single vendor.

The discussion turned to site shelter heating and cooling. Bob McWilliams is checking into economizer equipment that would reduce cooling needs and power consumption in site shelters. Members were then informed about the selection of the Belle Prairie (formerly the new Autovon) site and why it was selected as the location of the second master controller.

Sanders County is planning a microwave hop from Thompson Falls to Plains and will be working with BNSF Railway to accomplish this work. This hop will allow for direct access to Pat's Knob and to trunking. Missoula County is looking at establishing two local microwave rings. Scott Bradford asked for cost estimates.

Ravalli County representatives have identified a critical site, but have been waiting for guidance from the IM. The site does not have power and a Form 299 needs to be developed and submitted to the Forest Service. PSSB volunteered to assist the county with this process.

Before adjourning the meeting, George Gupton suggested that the next WICC meeting be held during the HAZMAT Annual Conference for Indian Nations at the KwaTaqNuk Best Western Resort in Polson, which is taking place between March 16 and 19. All present agreed. Meeting location details will be provided.

Upcoming Meetings

March 5

Northern Tier Consortium (NTIC)
Havre • 9:00 am - noon
Great Northern Inn, 1345 1st St.

March 9

IM Finance Committee
Helena • 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Anderson ZurMuehlen, 828 Great Northern Blvd.

March 9

IM Governance Committee
Helena • Noon - 5:00 pm
Dept. of Corrections Annex, Behind 515 N. Sanders St.

March 10

IM Project Directors (IMPD) Meeting
Helena • 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
MACo Large Conference Rm., Lower Level
2715 Skyway Drive